

Switzerland

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Switzerland

A. General

Animal disease control and sanitary production of food of animal origin is comparable to that of countries such as West Germany or the Netherlands. The government maintains firm control over disease control and eradication policies which are generally favorably accepted and supported by livestock producers. Veterinarians are well distributed throughout the country. Official veterinarians and private practitioners collaborate effectively in carrying out the rigid regulations pertaining to animal diseases. Regional veterinary personnel are well supported by investigative and diagnostic work through adequate federally financed central and regional bacteriological laboratories.

The veterinary faculties of two universities - Bern and Zurich - as well as several commercial biological producing firms, carry out necessary animal health research with close cooperation of veterinary practitioners or federal and local officials.

In addition to maintaining a relatively high national status in animal health, many Swiss veterinarians participate in foreign assignments, including service with International Organizations, such as the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. The headquarters for the United Nations World Health Organization, including its veterinary division, is located in Geneva.

The eradication of bovine tuberculosis and brucellosis, begun intensively about 1951, is well underway, and elimination of these diseases is scheduled in

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1/ 2/ 6/ 7/ 11/ 12/ 13/ 16/
1961.

B. Environmental factors

1. Topography and climate - The mountainous Swiss terrain definitely influences animal health and nutrition. The climate in alpine meadow areas, used cooperatively during the summer, requires return of animals to lower elevations for confined winter feeding. This constant annual movement of animals requires close investigation and supervision of animal health to prevent the widespread dissemination of infectious diseases. 1/ 2/

2. Socio-economic pattern - The high productivity of Swiss livestock is largely a result of the cooperative use of alpine pastures and the efficient organization of seasonal migration. Regulated animal health control is an essential feature of this livestock system that has contributed so much to the country's economy by providing a large volume of export dairy products and breeding animals. 1/ 2/ 16/

h. Nutrition

c. Food sanitation, storage and technology - The distribution of food of animal origin is well regulated and supervised in Switzerland. Veterinary inspection is effective, assuring the availability of healthful products. 1/ 2/ 6/

C. Diseases

2. Diseases of animals - The important animal diseases in Switzerland are generally well controlled. Infectious diseases have been much reduced in recent years, and attention is being directed toward the less significant diseases and parasitic conditions. Investigations of a few important physiological and nutritional deficiency conditions are underway. 1/ 2/ 16/

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(1) Foot-and-mouth disease - Foot-and-mouth disease is a periodic scourge of Swiss livestock. Outbreaks have been handled by a combination of vaccination, isolation and eradication measures which have, in recent years, been generally effective in limiting the spread of the disease. Reinfection from outside sources is a constant threat and requires vigilance and prompt preventive action. 1/2/11/16/18/

(2) Tuberculosis - Bovine tuberculosis eradication is proceeding on schedule and approaching a stage of completion, anticipated in 1961. At that time infection rates will be reduced to a fraction of 1 percent and the situation will require only a surveillance to prevent the dissemination of the disease from minor infection reservoirs. 1/ 2/ 12/ 13/

(3) Brucellosis - Bovine brucellosis eradication is nearly as advanced as that of tuberculosis and is expected to be successfully terminated about the same time. The program combines reactor slaughter, calfhood vaccination and strict sanitation of infected premises, particularly in community pasture areas. Bovine abortion, under any circumstances, is a reportable condition leading to immediate veterinary investigation and full sanitary precaution. Pasteurization of dairy products, at least in municipal areas, has reduced the human health hazard aspects of this disease. Brucella melitensis infection among sheep and goats is a more serious situation, since the results in serological testing are less definitive. Nevertheless, reactors are being slaughtered on identification of infection, which may lead to eventual control of this form of brucellosis also. 1/ 2/ 11/ 12/

(4) Mange - Sarcoptic mange - Sarcoptes scabiei - has been a serious problem affecting production of Swiss cattle. Extensive use of chemical dips, mandatory

for animals proceeding to community pastures, has reduced the incidence in the last few years.

Sheep scab - Psoroptes ovis, also quite prevalent, is being controlled by mandatory dipping. 1/ 11/ 16/

(5) Hog cholera - Periodic hog cholera outbreaks have taken a heavy toll of swine in past years. The necessary importation of swine for slaughter or of pork products from affected areas will continue to be occasional sources of infection. However, recent wider application of new and more efficient vaccine has provided improved protection and reduced losses from this disease. 1/ 11/ 16/

(6) Newcastle's disease - Newcastle's disease is the most serious poultry disease in Switzerland. Vaccination is fairly effective in control, but continued introduction of poultry from infected areas makes occasional outbreaks inevitable. 1/ 11/ 16/ 19/

(7) Other important diseases - Anthrax and blackleg occur sporadically but losses are limited because of the common practice of vaccination. Contagious agalactia in sheep and goats is a minor problem, but one which might become serious since no effective vaccines have been developed. Myxomatosis of rabbits is periodically serious and no solution to this problem has been found. 1/ 2/ 11/ 12/ 16/

D. Veterinary organization and administration

1. Civilian

a. Organization - The Swiss Federal Veterinary Office is effectively organized to provide guidance and supervision of the veterinary regulatory programs. Under this system, a relatively small national service force, in effect, regulates established standards for disease control programs. Cantonal

Chart I

and local private practitioners carry out the major functional duties.

National supervision over veterinary biological and pharmaceutical production is carried out by the Federal Vaccine and Sera Control Office. The efficiency of this agency has resulted in a general international acceptance of Swiss veterinary products.

The Federal Vaccine Production Institute at Basel is the only institution in Switzerland entrusted with foot-and-mouth disease vaccine production, and this is its principal function.

The Federal Veterinary Office coordinates the policies related to veterinary matters established by other government divisions, and acts as a liaison office on veterinary matters which are the responsibility of veterinary installations and livestock associations not under its direct control.

Cantonal veterinary responsibilities, including meat inspection, are divided between official veterinary officers and private practitioners - the latter group subsidized for part-time work.

Allocation of funds for veterinary activities is generally adequate. emergency requirements in cases of large-scale foot-and-mouth disease outbreaks or intensive programs, such as tuberculosis eradication, are usually provided on recommendation of special commissions. (See Chart I.) ^{1/ 2/ 13/ 19/}

b. Legal controls

(1) Licensure - A veterinary diploma from one of the two Swiss veterinary colleges is required for veterinary employment or practice eligibility. ^{1/ 2/ 6/}

(2) Quarantine - Laws and amendments, principally based on an import Law of 1917, are designed to protect Swiss livestock and the human population from

introduction of disease through incoming animals or animal products. Inspection by the Frontier Veterinary Office is strengthened when serious disease outbreaks occur in areas from which importations are made. The Frontier Veterinary Office has authority for condemnation, quarantine and disinfection of animals, animal products or transit equipment. 1/ 2/ 13/

(3) Inspection - Effective veterinary inspection of animal products is conducted throughout Switzerland under authority of legislation of the Federal Council. Meat inspection supervision is conducted by the Cantonal government veterinarians and milk testing is undertaken in the Cantonal Veterinary Bacteriological Institutes.

The Veterinary Police enforce the regulations related to inspection and movement of livestock.

The Office for Control of Sera and Vaccine is responsible for testing and issuing permits for all veterinary biologicals produced in Switzerland, as well as those imported. 1/ 2/ 6/ 13/

c. Professional veterinary organizations - The Swiss Veterinary Society (La Societe des Veterinaires Suisses), created in 1813, has a membership comprising at least 90 percent of the active profession. It publishes an official scientific periodical and is active in the Commission for Animal Health and Development. The Society encourages ethical conduct of members. 1/ 2/

d. Veterinary medical research - Swiss veterinary research is generally sound and progressive. A large share of research support is supplied by the commercial veterinary firms in collaborative projects with the universities or other government

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research institutes. The most significant Swiss veterinary research achievements have been in the field of animal physiology, with particular emphasis on nutrition and climatology. 1/ 2/ 3/ 5/ 7/ 13/

f. Emergency veterinary services - Switzerland has a highly efficiently organized system of veterinary emergency services. Federal authority permits the mobilization of all Swiss veterinarians in cases of impending serious animal disease outbreaks. The Veterinary Police, in collaboration with common law enforcement bodies, promptly implement veterinary orders dealing with quarantine, disinfection or restricted movement of livestock. 1/ 2/ 13/

2. Military veterinary service

The Veterinary Corps is on an equal basis with the Medical Corps of the Swiss Army. About 500 veterinarians are officers of the corps, but only a few of these are on continuous active duty. Each year nearly all veterinary graduates attend a nine-week officer aspirant's course and subsequently, as lieutenants, a 120-day courses at various stations. The corps maintains Remount Depots consisting of approximately 1500 horses. Eighty percent are issued to civilians in the militia each year, and about 1000 head per year are purchased from European countries as replacements. 1/ 23/

E. Veterinary manpower

There are approximately 800 veterinarians in Switzerland. About 15 percent of the total veterinary force is engaged in established official posts in federal, cantonal or municipal agencies or institutions. The remainder are engaged in part-time official duties and private practice. Switzerland has an adequate number of veterinarians to carry out necessary animal disease control and public health programs. In recent years a considerable number of veterinarians have sought employment in international agencies and foreign countries, because of strong

competition for desirable positions in the country itself.

The two Swiss veterinary faculties at Bern and Zurich graduate 40 to 50 veterinarians each year. The level of training is comparable to that of the better European schools and acceptable under standards set by the American Veterinary Medical Association Committee for evaluation of such institutions. Graduate training is excellent and regularly conducted. Ad hoc short courses are well attended by official government and practicing veterinarians. 1/ 2/ 6/ 13/

F. Veterinary medical facilities

Veterinary medical facilities, such as educational, research and clinical institutes, regional diagnostic laboratories and quarantine stations, are adequate and strategically located throughout Switzerland. Nearly all cantons have Bacteriological Institute Laboratories, equipped to handle specimens and diagnostic material for government investigative agencies and private practitioners.

Private veterinary biological and pharmaceutical concerns cooperate in providing equipment and facilities for investigations and experiments beyond the scope of official government installations. 1/ 2/ 3/ 5/ 7/

G. Veterinary supplies and material

High quality Swiss veterinary biologicals, pharmaceuticals and equipment are produced in adequate amount for domestic requirements for the most part. A considerable number of items in these categories are also produced for a growing export market. A few specialty items and some raw materials are imported. Distribution of veterinary supplies is well controlled, with outlets through pharmacies or veterinarians being specified by official regulations. Biologicals and pharmaceuticals are readily available. A few require administration by qualified veterinarians only.

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Foot-and-mouth disease vaccine is produced solely by the Federal Vaccine Institute at Basel at an annually estimated requirement rate. Temporary emergency requirements are occasionally obtained from other nearby European countries. 1/ 2/ 7/ 13/ 16/

H. Reference data

Chart I: Organization of the Swiss Veterinary Services.

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